

Family and Friends of First Presbyterian Church (Lynchburg),

How well can we make lemonade out of lemons? This time in our lives is unorthodox, unprecedented, and very interesting. It is fair to say this Lenten season is presenting us with a true wilderness story. But as the saying goes, when life gives you lemons, it is time to make lemonade (even if you don't like lemonade).

A colleague and mentor of mine, Rev. Dr. Ron Shive, has stated, "During this time, church is not canceled. Worship will just look a little different. Music is not canceled. It will just sound a little different. Committee work and ministry will not be canceled. It will just take place a little differently. Relationships will not be canceled. They will just feel a little different for a while. Faith will not be canceled. It will just grow in different ways for a while. Love will not be canceled. In fact, we will need more of it for a while." I would like to add that God has not gone away. The power and presence of the Holy Spirit is still very much alive. And it will be our hope and faith in God that can give us the courage, strength, and hope to take the sour lemons of life and add some water and sugar to make lemonade.

Government officials as well as church leaders from the General Assembly and Presbytery levels are cautioning all citizens to avoid activities involving potential exposure and contact that could facilitate viral transmission. The following article from The Atlantic is very helpful in understanding the current need for social distancing:

[https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2020/03/coronavirus-what-does-social-distancing-mean/607927/?fbclid=IwAR3m1crFA\\_wXYqwWJKfYIGuzZpRFTMrqzxOwz23dycMwtKi\\_vssg02xVDi8](https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2020/03/coronavirus-what-does-social-distancing-mean/607927/?fbclid=IwAR3m1crFA_wXYqwWJKfYIGuzZpRFTMrqzxOwz23dycMwtKi_vssg02xVDi8)

To honor these requests, there are some adjustments to the way we do church and practice being a community of faith that need to be considered. The following will be in effect through Sunday, March 29. During this time, we will continue to evaluate the situation and adjust accordingly. Please stay tuned to all forms of communication: email, Facebook, church website, and office voicemail.

- The Stated Session Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, March 17 has been cancelled. All Session members stay tuned to email for electronic votes.
- Worship on March 22 and 29 will be broadcast live on 105.9 FM WLNI and Facebook Live at 10:30 am on Sunday mornings. Bulletins can be downloaded from the home page of the church website: [www.fpclly.org](http://www.fpclly.org). Coffee Café and Lemonade & Cookies are cancelled those days.
- All Spiritual Growth opportunities for all ages, including all bible studies, book clubs, KidMin, and Youth Groups have been canceled through March 29. The staff will do our best to make devotional material and activities available online for those interested.
- All in-person Committee meetings are canceled through March 29. Committee chairs can determine if online meetings are necessary.
- Wednesday Lenten Prayer Services for March 18 and 25 have been cancelled.
- Chancel Ringers and Chancel Choir rehearsals for March 19 and 26 have been cancelled. In addition to this, the Lenten Choir Concert, *This is Our Story, This is Our Song*, presented by First Pres Presents, that was scheduled for Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup> has been rescheduled for this Fall.
- The FPC Weekday School, following Lynchburg City School guidelines, will be closed through Friday, March 27.
- AI Anon and Scouts determine their meeting schedules. If you participate in either of these, please contact leadership for updated scheduling.
- Pastoral Care and Visitations— Through Sunday, March 29, we will be suspending all personal visitations to Westminster Canterbury, the Summit, Bentley Commons, Valley View, the hospitals and personal homes until health concerns lessen. The staff and Care and Nurture Committee will be making an effort to be in touch with as many folks as possible, particularly those who have been hospitalized recently, are facing or recuperating from surgery, or embracing the loss of a loved one. For all end of life events, we will work with families needing funerals or memorial services to help coordinate and support their needs in the best ways possible. Please contact us if you have any concerns or are aware of church members who are in need for some additional care and attention.
- Westminster Canterbury Luncheon cancelled March 26
- FPCLY Staff will maintain a regular working schedule Monday through Friday, 8:30 to 5 pm.
- Note: No decisions have been made for yet for the Easter Egg Hunt and Activities on April 4<sup>th</sup> or Holy Week Worship opportunities April 9 through 12. We will be assessing the situation carefully and plan to keep everyone posted as decisions are made.

We love you all and thank God for each of you. If you think of it, post on Facebook or email [office@fpclly.org](mailto:office@fpclly.org) to share any stories or pictures of how you have made lemonade out of lemons.

Run the Race, Fight the Fight, Keep the Faith

Peter